

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IO-13 EUR-12 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-07

LAB-04 SIL-01 /098 W

-----041261 021525Z /53

R 021135Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2433

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LOME 1777

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, APER

SUBJECT: ORGANIZING FOR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

REF: STATE 148782

1. SUMMARY: TOGO HAS GIVEN A NUMBER OF INDICATIONS RECENTLY THAT IT IS OPEN TO IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE US. IT FEELS ENCOURAGED BY HIGH LEVEL OF US INTEREST IN AFRICAN POLITICAL QUESTIONS AND HOPEFUL THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WILL BE MORE SUPPORTIVE OF ITS DEVELOPMENT ASPIRATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, THESE ENCOURAGING TRENDS IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WILL NOT EASILY TRANSLATE INTO FAVORABLE TOGOLESE VOTES IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. THE DETERMINANTS THAT HAVE LED TOGO TO ADOPT A TYPICAL THIRD WORLD PATTERN OF BEHAVIOR IN MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE. REALISTICALLY, THE US CANNOT HOPE FOR MORE THAN OCCASIONAL AMBIGUITY IN TOGO'S ADHERENCE TO THE AFRICAN AND THIRD WORLD CONSENSUS AND AN INCREASED PREFERENCE FOR NON-CONFRONTATIONAL HANDLING OF MULTILATERAL ISSUES IN HOPES OF AVOIDING UNNECESSARY STRAINS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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2. TOGO'S CONCERN ABOUT INCREASING SOVIET ACTIVITY IN THE REGION AND HOPE THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WILL BE MORE SUPPORTIVE OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS HAS LED TO IMPROVED PROSPECTS FOR US-TOGOLESE BILATERAL RELATIONS. US POLICY ADJUSTMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA HAVE BEEN WELCOMED BOTH BECAUSE THEY REINFORCE TOGOLESE PREFERENCE FOR "DIALOGUE" IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND BECAUSE

TOGO IS CONVINCED THAT, AS IN ANGOLA, MILITARY SOLUTIONS WILL INEVITABLY INCREASE SOVIET INFLUENCE. THE TOGOLESE HAVE SIGNALLED THEIR SHIFT FROM A FEELING THAT THE US WAS ESSENTIALLY IRRELEVANT TO TOGOLESE ASPIRATIONS TO A DESIRE FOR INCREASED COOPERATION IN NUMEROUS WAYS: THEY HAVE EXPRESSED TO US ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT SOVIET INFLUENCE; THEY HAVE SOUGHT MORE FREQUENT AND HIGHER LEVEL CONTACTS WITH US OFFICIALS; THEY HAVE IMPROVED THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS POSTURE; CONTACTS WITH AID OFFICIALS HAVE BECOME MORE PURPOSEFUL; AND THERE HAS BEEN A SUBTLE BUT POSITIVE EVOLUTION IN MISSION CONTACTS WITH ALL LEVELS. BUSINESS WITH THE GOT IS EASIER TO CONDUCT.

3. THESE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, HOWEVER, WILL NOT EASILY TRANSLATE INTO FAVORABLE VOTES IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. TOGO REMAINS ACUTELY AWARE THAT AS A SMALL AND POOR COUNTRY IT HAS NO INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCE IN WORLD AFFAIRS AND BELIEVES IT IS IMPORTANT TO JOIN IN COMBINATIONS OF COUNTRIES WHICH CAN ACHIEVE INFLUENCE. THUS, IT NORMALLY SUPPORTS AFRICAN AND THIRD WORLD POSITIONS WHEN THERE IS A CONSENSUS. RARELY, IF EVER, DOES TOGO BELIEVE THAT THE RESOLUTIONS AT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AFFECT TANGIBLE NATIONAL INTERESTS AND THEREBY WARRANT AN INDEPENDEND OR NATIONAL POSITION. TOGO'S ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY
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FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON AFRICAN AND WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND ON RELATIONS WITH PROSPECTIVE DONORS. MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY IS OF LOWER PRIORITY AND IS SHAPED BY A DESIRE THAT GOGO SHOULD NOT TAKE POSITIONS THAT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT MORE IMPORTANT RELATIONS IN THE REGION.

4. INERTIA ALSO PYAYS A PART IN KEEPING TOGO'S VOTING RECORD IN ITS PRESENT THIRD WORLD MOLD. ON MANY PERENNIAL INTERNATIONAL ISSUES -- KOREA, THE MIDDLE EAST, ETC. -- TOGO'S POSITIONS HAVE BEEN REPEATEDLY STATED AND WOULD CHANGE ONLY IN RESPONSE TO RADICALLY NEW SITUATIONS. THIS STAND PATISM IS REINFORCED BY THE PROCEDURE OF TOGOLESE DIPLOMACY. DELEGATIONS ARE GIVEN GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS (USUALLY TO COORDINATE WITH OTHER AFRICANS) AND NORMALLY ARE NOT EXPECTED TO KEEP THE FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS DURING A CONFERENCE; UNINFORMED ON THE CONFERENCE SITUATION, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HESITATES TO INSTRUCT A DELEGATION ONCE A CONFERENCE HAS BEGUN.

5. SINCE TOGO DOES NOT NORMALLY EXPECT TO GAIN

TANGIBLE BENEFITS AS A RESULT OF ITS PARTICIPATION IN
MULTINATIONAL DIPLOMACY, ITS CONFERENCE BEHAVIOR IS
ESSENTIALLY SYMBOLIC: A MEANS OF DISPLAYING ITS
SOVEREIGNTY, REAFFIRMING ITS NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN
POLICY, CALLING ATTENTION TO ITS AGGRIEVED CONDITIONS
AS A LDC, AND EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH FELLOW AFRICANS.
IN THESE CONDITIONS THE FACTS OF AN ISSUE MAY NOT BE
DECISIVE; TOGOLESE OFFICIALS, FOR EXAMPLE, UNDERSTAND
CLEARLY THE US CASE ON PUERTO RICO, BUT CANNOT BRING
THEMSELVES NOT TO SUPPORT AN "ANTICOLONIALIST" POSITION,
HOWEVER DISINGENUOUSLY DEFINED.

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USIA-06 AID-05 IO-13 EUR-12 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-07
LAB-04 SIL-01 /098 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2434

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LOME 1777

6. GIVEN THE PRIORITIES AND DETERMINANTS OF TOGO'S
PERFORMANCE IN CONFERENCE DIPLOMACY, TOGO'S DESIRE TO
IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE US WILL NOT BE
REFLECTED IN ANY MAJOR REALIGNMENT OF ITS VOTING
BEHAVIOR. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT TOGO MAY DISPLAY
MORE CONCERN AT THE PROSPECT OF FINDING ITSELF IN
CONFRONTATION SITUATIONS WITH THE US, ESPECIALLY ON
ISSUES WHERE US PRESTIGE IS DIRECTLY INVOLVED.
TOGO WAS PROBABLY PLEASED THAT ROLL CALL VOTES ON
GUAM AND PUERTO RICO WERE AVOIDED AT LAST FALL'S
UNGA. IN SOME SITUATIONS, TOGO MAY PREFER TO SEND
AMBIGUOUS SIGNALS RATHER THAN GIVE UNCONDITIONAL
SUPPORT TO POSITIONS STRONGLY OPPOSED BY THE US.
THIS MAY HAVE OCCURRED AT THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE.
AFTER STRONG EMBASSY REPRESENTATIONS ON ILO ISSUES,
THE GOT CHOSE TO ALLOW ITS EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS
DELEGATIONS TO VOTE WITH THE US ON THE CRUCIAL VOTE
ON ACCEPTANCE OF THE COMMITTEE REPORT ON APPLICATION
OF CONVENTIONS, WHILE THE GOVERNMENT CAST ITS TWO ABSTENTIONS
AGAINST THE US AND WITH THE THIRD WORLD MAJORITY.

7. OTHER CHANGES IN TOGO'S FOREIGN POLICY ENVIRONMENT
COULD ALSO CONTRIBUTE IN THE FUTURE TO A MORE FAVORABLE
VOTING RECORD. THE INCREASING IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION
IN AFRICA MAY REACH A POINT WHEN ON MANY INTERNATIONAL
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ISSUES AN AFRICAN CONSENSUS WOULD NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE.
IN SUCH CASES, TOGO MIGHT CHOOSE A COMPROMISE POSITION
OR ABSTAIN ON CERTAIN ISSUES WHERE IT IS NOW PREDICTABLY
IN THE WROND COLUMN FROM THE US POINT OF VIEW. AT THE
EXTREME, IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION COULD DEVELOP TO A DEGREE
THAT TOGO WOULD FIND A REGIONAL CONSENSUS IN
OPPOSING RADICAL NON-ALIGNED POSITIONS; WE ARE
NOT, HOWEVER, HOLDING OUR BREATH.

8. REALISTICALLY, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT DISCERN-
IBLE, BUT LIMITED, IMPROVEMENT IN TOGO'S VOTING
RECORD CAN BE ACHIEVED. WE CANNOT EXPECT OUTRIGHT
SUPPORT FOR US POSITIONS WHERE THIS WOULD COMPROMISE
TOGO'S NON-ALIGNED ORIENTATION. IMPROVEMENT WILL
TAKE THE FORM OF INCREASED AMBIGUITY, MORE AWARENESS
OF THE STERILITY OF CONFRONTATION, AND MORE AMENABILITY
TO COMPROMISE POSITIONS. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TOGO'S
DESIRE FOR IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THE
BETTER ACCESS TO GOT OFFICIALS WHICH GOES WITH IT,
THE EMBASSY CAN ENCOURAGE THESE LIMITED IMPROVEMENTS
BY CLEARLY EXPLAINING THE NATURE AND DEGREE OF US
INTERESTS INVOLVED IN PARTICULAR IMSUES. WE SHOULD,
HOWEVER, LIMIT OUR SHOTS TO PROMISING TARGETS,
ESPECIALLY ISSUES ON WHICH TOGO IS NOT YET FIRMLY
COMMITTED. REPETITIVE DEMARCHES AGAINST EVERY ANTI-
ISRAEL OR BAD KOREAN RESOLUTION IN EVERY FORUM, FOR
EXAMPLE, WILL DEVALUE OUR REPRESENTATIONS IN
POTENTIALLY MORE EFFECTIVE AREAS. AND, TO BE EFFECTIVE THE
EMBASSY MUST CONTINUE RPT CONTINUE TO GET GOOD MATERIAL, IN
FRENCH, AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE BEFORE KEY MULTILATERAL ISSUES
COME UP IN INTERNATIONAL FORA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 148782
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1976997
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ORGANIZING FOR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY
TAGS: PORG, APER, TO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4edcf071-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009